

## Focus Canada – Fall 2021

# Canadian public opinion about immigration and refugees

### FINAL REPORT

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*As part of its Focus Canada public opinion research program (launched in 1976), the Environics Institute updated its research on Canadian attitudes about immigration and refugees. This survey was conducted in partnership with the Century Initiative. This survey is based on telephone interviews conducted (via landline and cellphones) with 2,000 Canadians between September 7 and 23, 2021. A sample of this size drawn from the population produces results accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points in 19 out of 20 samples.*

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### Executive summary

The past year in Canada has been like no other due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which persists on the strength of new variants despite a monumental vaccination campaign. Governments have striven to manage the new pandemic reality through programs supporting lost income and employment, and policies to balance public health restrictions with the resumption of normal activity. As the country moved past the crisis phase, the politics and issues of the pre-pandemic past have begun to resurface. Immigration and refugees (and multiculturalism more broadly) have not been front and centre over the past year, and were largely absent as an issue during the recent federal election. But some may be wondering how much the difficulties and stress of the past year have affected Canadians' capacity for openness to others.

Results from the latest Focus Canada survey reveal that Canadians continue to be largely positive and supportive about immigrants and refugees, who are much more likely to be viewed as making a positive contribution to the country than posing a threat. Opinions over the past 12 months are mostly stable, although small declines in positive sentiments have been recorded in several key measures that reverse similar gains dating over the previous year. A clear majority supports current levels of immigration, views immigrants as good for the Canadian economy, and believes they are important for building the country's population. An increasing plurality rejects the idea that too many refugees are not legitimate, and most would like to see more of them accepted from places experiencing major conflicts. There is clear public support for the recently-announced decision to accept 20,000 Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban, although one in four Canadians say this number is too few. Public concerns about immigration continues to be mostly centred around some immigrants not adopting Canadian values, but the proportion articulating this issue is not on a clear rise, and very few name any specific ethnic or cultural groups they believe should be kept out of the country.

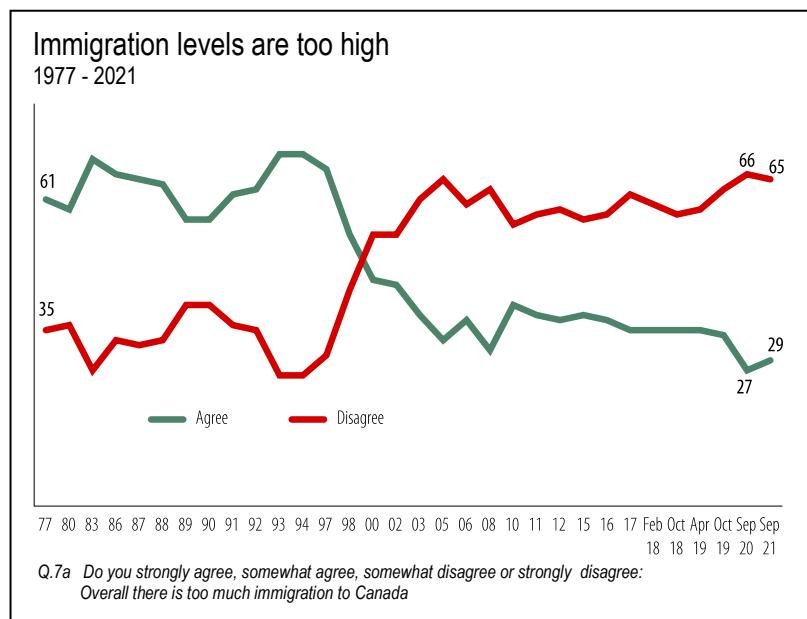
As before, perspectives sometimes differ across the country, by region, age group, educational attainment, household income, generation in the country, and political party support. In many cases these differences are a matter of degree rather than fundamental disagreement, and have not sharpened over the past year. Positive sentiments toward immigrants and refugees continue to be most common in Atlantic Canada and among Canadians ages 18 to 29, and least evident in the Prairie provinces. Perspectives on these issues diverge most significantly across partisan political lines, with NDP and Liberal Party supporters the strongest proponents of immigration and Conservative Party supporters much less so, while those supporting the People's Party of Canada most in opposition. Yet on some measures these differences have narrowed over the past year (even as the survey was conducted during a hard-fought national election), suggesting that immigration and refugees may be ebbing as a wedge issue in Canadian politics.

## Overall level of immigration

*Two-thirds of Canadians continue to disagree that immigration levels are too high. A majority also believes Canada needs more immigrants to increase its population.*

**Agree-Disagree: “Overall, there is too much immigration to Canada.”** Canadians continue to reject the premise that their country is taking in too many immigrants, by more than a two-to-one margin. Roughly two-thirds (65%) disagree with this statement, compared with three in ten (29%) who agree, and another five percent who neither agree nor disagree or otherwise have no opinion to offer. These results are largely unchanged from the previous Focus Canada survey (conducted in September 2020), but reflect a two percentage point increase in the proportion who agree with the statement, and one point decrease in the percentage who disagree. This change in itself is not statistically significant, but does mark the end of a trend toward increasing support for immigration levels dating back to October 2018.

As before, Atlantic Canadians are among the most accepting of current immigration levels, but this view has weakened noticeably since 12 months ago (70% disagree with the statement, down 7 percentage points), which is now on par with opinions expressed by Quebecers (70% disagree, up 1). In recent years, positive views about immigration have been least evident in the Prairies, and have ebbed further since Fall 2020 as disagreement with this statement about too many immigrants has declined in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (53%, down 8) but increased in Alberta (62%, up 3).



Opinions about immigration levels continue to vary by educational attainment and household income. While at least a majority of Canadians in all groups disagree that there is too much immigration to their country, those with the least education and income are almost twice as likely as those with the most to express concerns about the number immigrants being accepted (41% of those earning less than \$30K, versus 24% of those earning \$100K plus). By comparison, age and gender are less apt to reflect differences in opinions on this issue. There is no difference between the views of Canadians living in the five largest cities and those living in other parts of the country.

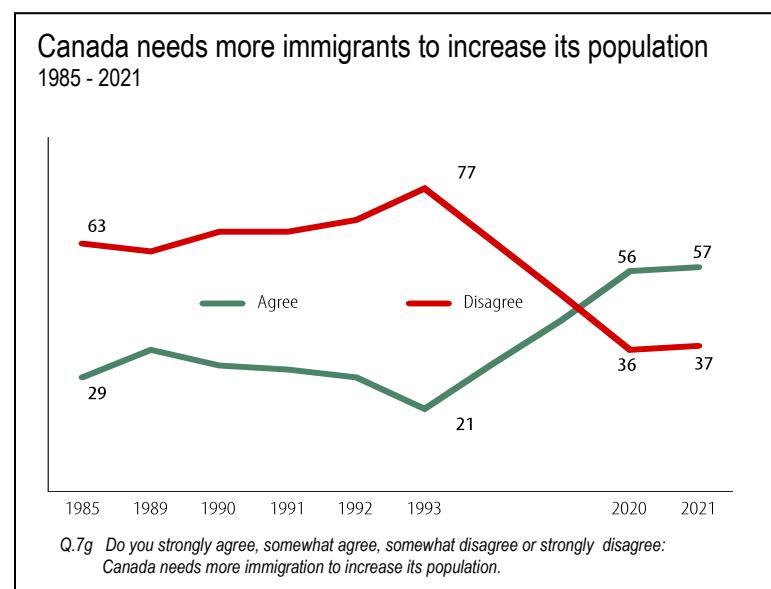
First generation Canadians (those born in another country) have characteristically been among the most supportive of current immigration levels. But opinions within this group have shifted noticeably since 2020, with an increasing proportion now in agreement with the statement (36%, up 10 points), compared with 27 percent of those who are Canadian-born (down 1). A similar shift is evident among racialized Canadians (39% are now in agreement, up 9 points and reflecting a 7 to 8 point shift from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Immigration did not emerge as a significant issue in the 2021 federal election campaign, but it continues to be one that divides supporters of the national political parties. Support for current immigration levels continues to be most widespread Canadians who support the federal NDP (81% disagree with the statement) and federal Liberal Party (75%), compared with the federal Conservative Party (54%); these results are essentially unchanged from one year ago. This view is shared by only one-third (33%) of People’s Party of Canada supporters.<sup>1</sup> Since 2020, support for current immigration levels has increased among supporters of the Bloc Québécois (70%, up 5).

<sup>1</sup> Trend data are not reported for the People’s Party of Canada because of a small sample size in 2020.

**Agree-Disagree: “Canada needs more immigration to increase its population.”** Immigration is now responsible for most of the country’s population growth, and this demographic reality is now largely acknowledged by the Canadian public. A majority (57%) agree with this statement about needing more immigration to increase the country’s population, compared with just over one-third (37%) who disagree, and another six percent who have no clear opinion either way. These results are essentially unchanged from 2020, but reflect a sea change in perspective from the 1980s and 1990s, when most Canadians firmly rejected the premise.

Predictably, views about the need for immigration to boost the population are linked to those about current immigration levels. Agreement with the statement about needing more immigration is most widespread in Atlantic Canada (67%), among first generation Canadians (68%) and those who support the Liberal Party (73%) and the NDP (66%). By comparison, views are evenly divided in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (46% agree, versus 45% disagree) and among supporters of the Conservatives (47%, versus 48%). Agreement is least evident among supporters of the People’s Party of Canada (22% versus 71%).



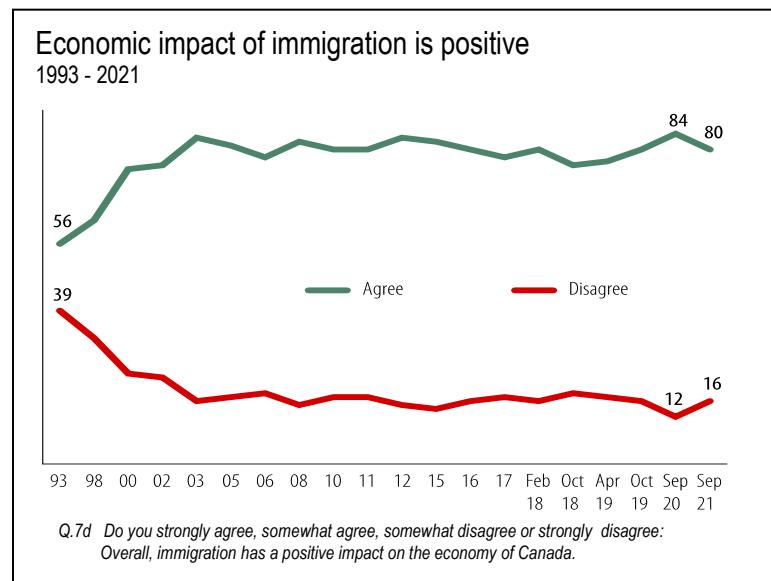
While opinions on this question have changed little at the national level since 2020, notable shifts have taken place within some groups. Specifically, agreement with the need for more immigration to boost population has expanded among Albertans (49%, up 5), while declining among British Columbians (49%, down 6). As well, the gap in opinions across socio-economic strata has narrowed considerably since a year ago, as those with less education and income are now more likely to agree with the statement while those at the top are less apt to do so.

## Economic impact of immigration

**Most Canadians see immigrants as important to the Canadian economy, and support government efforts to attract more immigrants to come and start new businesses.**

**Agree-Disagree: “Overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Canada.”**

Canadians’ support for immigration is grounded in the belief that it supports the country’s economy. Eight in ten (80%) agree with the statement that immigration has a positive economic impact, although this reflects a four percentage point decline since 12 months ago, reversing a previous growing trend dating back to 2018. One in six (16%) now disagree with this view (up 4 points), with another four percent expressing no opinion either way.



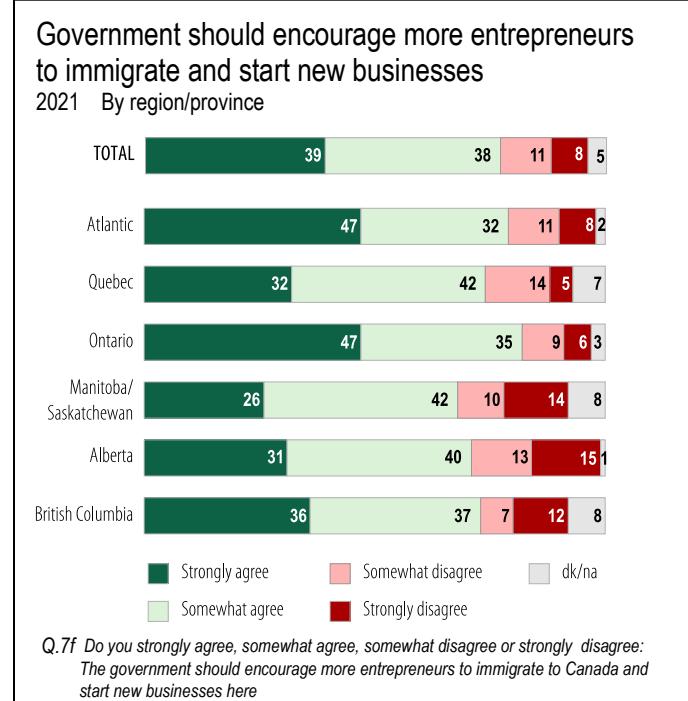
This small decline in agreement with the statement over the past year has occurred across most of the population, but significantly in British Columbia (76% now agree, down 12 points overall, and down 13 points among those who *strongly agree*), where belief in the economic benefits of immigration was the strongest in the country 12 months ago. Smaller declines in this viewpoint have taken place in eastern and central Canada (81% combined), down 5; reversing an upward trend over the previous year), while the opposite shift has occurred in the three Prairie provinces (77%, up 4). Belief in the economic benefits of immigration have also softened noticeably among Canadians ages 18 to 29 (80%, down 10), those in the top income bracket (82%, down 8) and men (77%, down 8).

As with other attitudes about immigration, opinions about the economic benefits diverge along political partisan lines. Agreement with the statement is overwhelming among supporters of the Liberal Party (89%, down 2 from 2020) and the NDP (90%, down 5), a view shared by smaller majorities of those supporting the Bloc Québécois (77%, down 6), the Conservative Party (69%, down 7) and the People's Party of Canada (63%).

**Agree-Disagree: The government should encourage more entrepreneurs to immigrate to Canada and start new businesses here.**<sup>2</sup> Given Canadians' positive sentiments about the economic benefits of immigrants, it is not surprising that there is widespread public support for attracting more entrepreneurs from other countries. Three in four (76%) agree with this statement about government promoting immigration among entrepreneurs to start new businesses in Canada, with almost four in ten (39%) who strongly agree. Just under one in five (19%) disagree with the statement (with 8% in strong disagreement).

Support for government efforts to attract more immigrant entrepreneurs is evident across the country, with agreement with the statement most prevalent in Atlantic Canada (79%) and Ontario (81%), as well as among first generation Canadians (82%) and Liberal Party supporters (85%), and in each case close to half say they *strongly agree* with the statement. By comparison, *opposition* to government promotion of immigrant entrepreneurs is most evident in Alberta (28%), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (25%), and supporters of the People's Party of Canada (38%).

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<sup>2</sup> This is the first time this question was included on a Focus Canada survey.

## Refugee policy

*Canadians increasingly reject the notion that most refugee claimants are not legitimate. Majorities support accepting more refugees from countries experiencing major conflict, and endorse the government's decision to admit 20,000 Afghan refugees who are fleeing the Taliban.*

**Agree-Disagree: "Many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees."** Refugees make up a small proportion of newcomers arriving in Canada, but in recent years they have attracted considerable attention due to an influx of refugees from Syria since 2015, and most recently a new wave now arriving from Afghanistan following the takeover of that country by the Taliban.

While in previous decades Canadians have tended to view refugees with suspicion, there is now much less concern about the legitimacy of those seeking a safe refuge from other countries. The current survey reveals that close to half (46%) of Canadians reject the statement that many refugees are not real refugees, up five percentage points from 2020 and now at its highest value since 2017. One-third (34%, unchanged) continue to agree with this statement, while a declining proportion are unable to offer an opinion (19%, down 5).

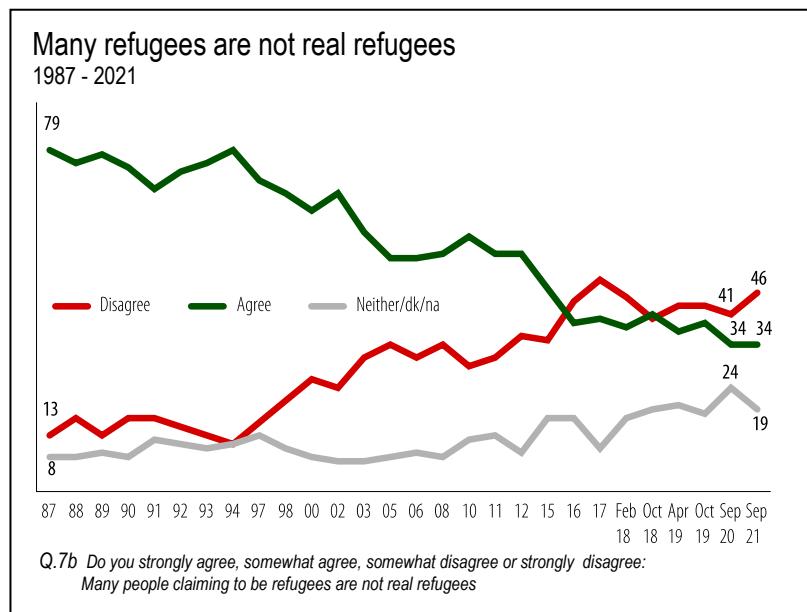
Increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of refugees arriving in Canada is evident across most of the population, but most noticeably in Ontario (49% disagree with the statement, up 9 points since 2020) and among Canadians ages 18 to 44 (57%, up 11 points). British Columbians – who in 2020 were among the most sympathetic toward refugees – are now somewhat less so and conform to the national average (45% disagree with the statement, down 5).

As before, the most positive view of refugees is expressed in Atlantic

Canada (54% disagree with the statement), among Canadians 18 to 44 (57%), women (51%) and those with the most education (55%) and income (54%). By comparison, the belief that too many refugees are not real refugees is most apt to be expressed in Alberta (42% agree with the statement), Canadians 60 and older (43%), those without a high school diploma (41%), and those born in another country (46%); in each of these groups there have been increases in the percentage both in those who agree and those who disagree with the statement, as fewer now express no clear opinion.

As with immigration, opinions about the legitimacy of refugees is divided along partisan political lines, but this gap has diminished for the second year in a row. Agreement with the statement remains highest among supporters of the federal Conservative Party (48%, but down 5 since 2020 and down 16 points since 2019) and the People's Party of Canada (49%). NDP supporters continue to be the most positive about refugee legitimacy (70% disagree with the statement, up 6 points), followed by the federal Liberal Party (51%, unchanged) and the Bloc Québécois (46%, up 2).

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**Agree-Disagree: Canada ought to be accepting more immigrants from those parts of the world which are experiencing major conflicts.** Most of the refugees accepted into Canada come from countries and regions experiencing conflict and conditions that threaten their safety, and most Canadians support this policy. Seven in ten (70%) agree with this statement about Canada accepting more immigrants from places experiencing major conflicts, compared with one-quarter (24%) who disagree, and another seven percent who do not have a clear opinion either way. This perspective reflects a major change from public sentiment 20 to 30 years ago, when the balance of Canadians held the opposing view. In 2001, a majority disagreed with the statement by a 54 percent to 39 percent margin.

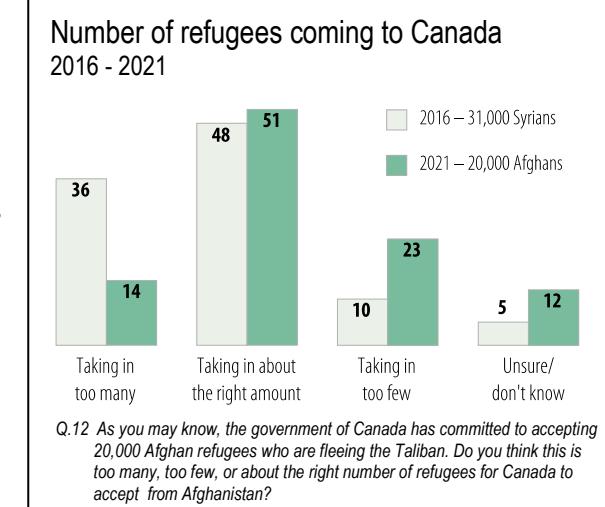
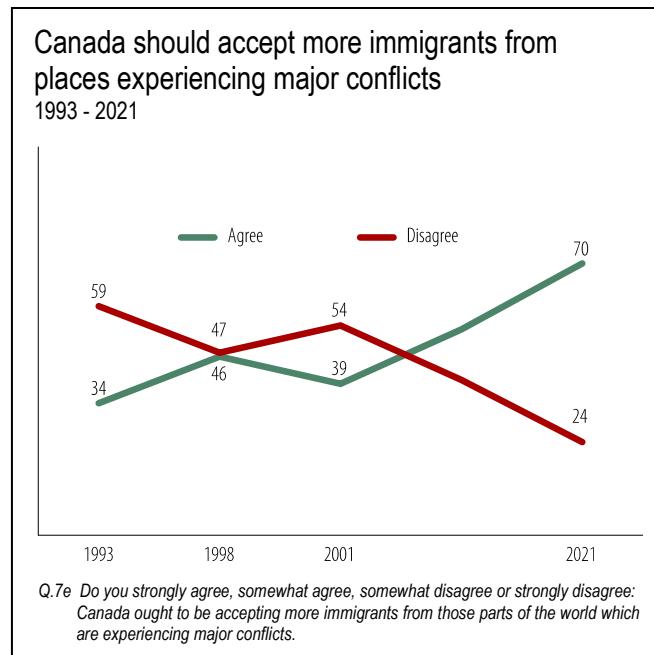
Public support for accepting more refugees from conflict zones is strong across the country, and most widespread among Atlantic Canadians (75% agree with the statement), those ages 18 to 29 (78%), and supporters of the federal NDP (89%) and Liberal Party (78%). This view is least apt to be shared by those who would vote for the federal Conservatives (59%) and People's Party of Canada (49%, versus 47% who disagree).

**Afghan refugee quota.** As the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan unfolded quickly in August, the federal government announced its intention of accepting 20,000 Afghan refugees over the near term. This was similar to the government making space for 40,000 Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016 in response to a crisis taking place in that country at the time. The survey asked Canadians what they thought about the decision to take in 20,000 Afghan refugees who are fleeing the Taliban (the government later increased this quota to 40,000).

Half (51%) of Canadians believe this is about the right number of Afghan refugees to admit into the country. Of the remainder, the balance is tilted towards those who say this is too few refugees (23%) over those who maintain it is too many to accept (14%). Another one in ten (12%) are unsure or unable to offer an opinion on this question.

This perspective is broadly similar to what was expressed by Canadians in Fall 2016 in response to the same question posed with reference to Canada having already accepted 31,000 refugees from Syria, with more to come. At that time, close to half (48%) said this number of refugees was about right, but the remainder were more likely to say this was too many (36%) than too few (10%). It may be that the country's experience with Syrian refugees in recent years established a foundation for being more comfortable with large numbers of refugees from other countries experiencing major conflict. And some Canadians may feel a sense of obligation to Afghans given their country's involvement in fighting the Taliban through military engagement and other forms of foreign aid.

With respect to opinions about how many Afghan refugees should be admitted, the endorsement of 20,000 as the right number is voiced by a majority or clear plurality across almost all identifiable groups, including those who



agree with the statement about too many refugees not being legitimate. Support for this quota is most widespread in Quebec (65%), among Canadians ages 60 and older (59%), first generation Canadians (58%), and supporters of the Bloc Québécois (68%), Liberal (57%) and Conservative (55%) parties. Those most likely to say that 20,000 is too few include the youngest age cohort (ages 18 to 29) (33%), second-generation Canadians (31%), those in the top income bracket (30%), and NDP supporters (48%). Canadians who believe that 20,000 is too many Afghan refugees to accept are most apt to be older, have less education, and support the People's Party of Canada (34%).

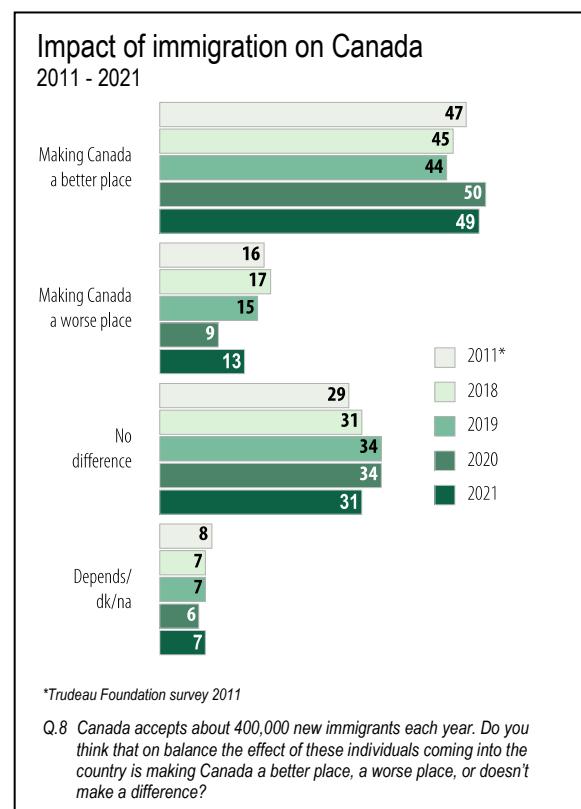
## Integration of immigrants into society

*Canadians continue to see immigrants as making Canada a better rather than a worse country, mostly because of what they contribute to diversity and to the economy. Many continue to express concerns about some newcomers not integrating into Canadian society, but very few name specific ethnic or cultural groups they believe should be kept out of the country.*

**Overall impact of immigrants on Canada.** How do Canadians feel about the overall effect of immigration on the country in which they live – is the net impact on balance positive or negative? As in past years dating back a decade, the weight of opinion is clearly positive. Canadians are almost four times as likely to say that immigration is making the country a better place (49%) than a worse one (13%). Another three in ten (31%) believe it has made no real difference either way, while the rest say either it depends (3%) or cannot say (4%).

While the balance of opinion on this question is positive, it is somewhat less so than a year ago as the proportion saying the impact of immigration is negative has increased by four percentage points. This reverses a downward trend recorded over the previous year, although the proportion expressing this negative view remains smaller than in the period between 2011 and 2018. This uptick in viewing immigration as a net negative for the country is evident across much of the population (rather than centred within specific groups), but is most pronounced in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (23%, up 12) and B.C. (16%, up 9%).

As in 2020, a positive assessment of immigration is most apt to be given by Canadians ages 18 to 29 (55%), those with most education (60%) and income (56%), first-generation Canadians (53%), and those who support the Liberal Party (64%) and the NDP (68%). This view is least apt to be shared in the Prairie provinces (43%) and among supporters of the Conservative Party (33%) and the People's Party of Canada (21%).



**How immigration makes the country better.** Canadians who say that immigrants make their country either better or worse were asked why they think so (unprompted, without offering response options). As in 2020, those who believe immigrants make their country better (49% of the population) are most likely to say this is because it adds to Canada's diversity and multiculturalism (46% of this group, or 23% of all Canadians) or because it benefits the economy (helps the economy grow, bringing their needed skills, and starting new businesses) (33%). Smaller proportions mention such benefits as building the overall population (6%), the fact that immigrants appreciate being in Canada (6%), and shows that Canadians are open-minded and caring (5%). These responses are largely similar to those recorded one year ago.

The benefits of immigration to the country's diversity and multiculturalism is the most common reason given across the country, but most noticeably among BC residents, Canadians under 45 years of age, and those who support the federal NDP. A focus on the economic benefits is emphasized among Canadians in the Prairie provinces, first generation Canadians, those who are racialized, and supporters of the federal Conservative Party.

**Why do you say that immigrants make Canada a [better/worse] place?**  
2020 – 2021 (unprompted)

MAKES CANADA A <b>BETTER PLACE</b> 50% of population in 2020, 49% in 2021			MAKES CANADA A <b>WORSE PLACE</b> 9% of population in 2020, 13% in 2021		
TOP MENTIONS	2020	2021	TOP MENTIONS	2020	2021
Adds to Canada's diversity/multiculturalism	53	46	Immigrants weaken Canadian (Quebec) identity / culture / too many people coming here are not like "us"	44	33
Helps Canada's economy grow / immigrants bring skills we need / immigrants start businesses	32	33	Immigrants drain on public finances / cost governments too much / drain on welfare	16	22
Helps Canada's population grow / we need more people	5	6	Immigrants hurt the economy / take jobs from other Canadians	14	14
Immigrants appreciate Canada / come for a better life	*	6	Immigrants are a security risk / risk of extremism or terrorism / not screened well enough	10	9
Shows Canadians are caring/open	3	5	Over population – there are too many people in Canada already	4	6
Enhances Canada's reputation around the world	3	1	Immigrants are a public health risk – may bring COVID-19 virus or other diseases to Canada	1	2
Other reasons	2	2	Other reasons	4	7

Q.9 Why do you say that new immigrants make Canada a [better / worse] place?

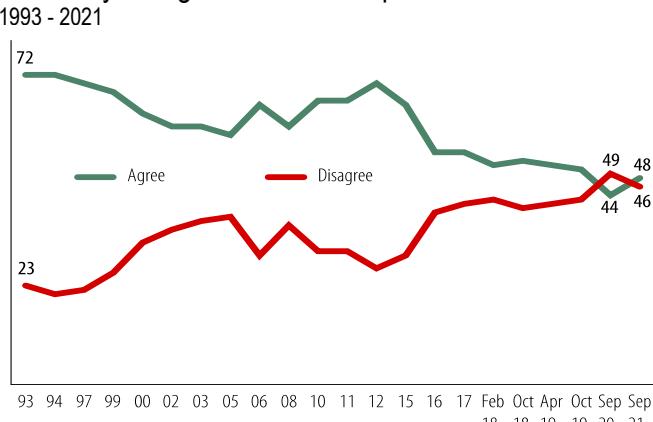
**How immigration makes the country worse.** Among the smaller proportion (13%) of Canadians who say that immigrants make the country worse, the predominant reason is that they weaken the Canadian (or Quebec) identity or lead to too much multiculturalism (33% of this group, or 4% of all Canadians); this is somewhat lower than the proportion expressing this concern in 2020.

Others say immigrants make Canada worse because they create a drain on public finances (22% of this group), hurt the economy or take jobs from other Canadians (14%), create a security risk (9%) or contribute to over-population (6%). As in 2020, very few mention concerns about immigrants posing a public health risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic (2% of this group, or .03 percent of all Canadians). Just two percent mention concerns about immigrants or foreign buyers affecting the housing market (e.g., driving up prices, creating scarcity).

**Agree-Disagree: "There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values."**

Public concerns about immigration are most likely to centre around how newcomers are not seen to be integrating into Canadian society, because of disapproval of, or discomfort with, their appearance or practices. This sentiment, once the norm, has been steadily declining over time but remains prominent. Canadians are now evenly divided between those who agree (48%) and those who disagree (46%)

**Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values**



Q.7c Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree:  
There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian

with this statement about too many immigrants not adopting Canadian values. This reflects a shift of several percentage points in the affirmative response, reversing a downward trend dating back to 2018.<sup>3</sup>

This small increase in expressed concerns about immigrant integration has taken place across much of the population (rather than centred within specific groups), but most noticeably among those who are generally supportive of immigration, including residents of Atlantic Canada, Quebec and B.C., as well as Canadians ages 18 to 29, those born in another country, and supporters of the federal Liberal Party.

As before, concerns about the integration of immigrants are most apt to be expressed by Canadians ages 60 plus (56% agree with the statement), those without a high school diploma (59%), those with household incomes under \$60K (53%), and supporters of the Conservative Party (64%) and the People's Party of Canada (71%) (notably, opinions of these latter two groups remain largely unchanged since a year ago). This negative view of immigrants is least apt to be shared by Canadians 18 to 29 (39%), those with a university degree (39%) and supporters of the NDP (27%, compared with 48% in this group who *strongly disagree*).

**Who should be kept out of the country?** Public concerns about integration most likely centre around specific types of immigrants who may be seen as different or in some way threatening. With this in mind, the survey asked the following question: *If Canada does allow more immigration, are there any groups of people that you would like to keep out?* (asked unprompted, without offering response options). This question was first asked in a national survey conducted in 2004 by the Centre for Research on Information about Canada (CRIC).

In response to this question, Canadians are most likely to say we should keep out people who pose a threat to the country's safety and security (as opposed to people from specific countries, regions or cultures). This includes criminals or dangerous people (18%), terrorists (17%) and extremists (7%); in each case the proportions are somewhat higher than what was recorded in 2004.

Considerably fewer believe the country should exclude people who won't adapt to Canadian culture and way of life (6%, up from 1% in 2004), those who are unemployable or unskilled (5%, up 3), people with COVID-19 or are unvaccinated (4%), Muslims (2%), and Arabs or others from the Middle East (including 1% who specifically name the Taliban) (2%). One in ten (9%) name other types of people (none by more than 1%), while, notably, a majority (55%) say no one should be excluded from being eligible to move to Canada.

Opinions about who should be kept out of the country are largely similar across the population. Concerns about people who won't adapt to Canadian culture are marginally more evident in

#### Which groups should be kept out of Canada? 2004 - 2021

	2004 %	2021 %
Criminals / dangerous people	12	18
Terrorists	11	17
Extremists	1	7
Those who won't adapt to Canadian culture/way of life	1	6
Unemployable / unskilled people	2	5
People with COVID19 / unvaccinated	-	4
Muslims	2	2
Arabs / people from the Middle East / Taliban	1	2
Other types of people	8	9
None / let everyone come	65	55
No answer	4	4

Q.10 *If Canada does allow more immigration, are there any groups of people that you would like to keep out?*

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that responses to this question are evenly distributed across the four options presented (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree). This indicates that opinions are not noticeably polarized into extreme positions among Canadians as a whole, although strongly-held attitudes are reflected in specific groups.

Quebec (9%) and among supporters of the Bloc Québécois (12%) and the People's Party of Canada (10%). Age makes a difference in how people respond to this question, with Canadians ages 18 to 29 most likely to say that everyone should be eligible to immigrate (73%), while those 60 plus are least apt to share this view (46%). Opinions are largely the same between first generation and native born Canadians, as well between those who are racialized and those who are white.

## How immigration factors into Canadians' views about their country

*Canadians are most likely to define their country's uniqueness in terms of being multicultural, inclusive and accepting of people like immigrants and refugees, well ahead of such attributes as freedom, democracy, the land, and health care. Almost no one identifies immigration as the country's top problem today.*

**What makes Canada unique?** Apart from specific attitudes and concerns about immigrants and refugees, how does this issue influence Canadians' views about their country in terms of its strengths and challenges? This was addressed through two questions on the current survey, the first of which asked respondents what they think makes Canada unique (asked unprompted).

Results confirm that many Canadians believe that welcoming people as immigrants and refugees from other parts of the world is an important part of what makes their country special. Close to half (48%) define their country's uniqueness in terms of its multiculturalism and the diversity of its people, a theme that encompasses acceptance of immigrants and refugees, tolerance of differences, and specific mention of Indigenous People's and culture.

By comparison, other themes less widely identified include the country's political system, freedom and democracy (25%), its distinctive geography, natural resources and weather (21%), qualities of the people (e.g., friendly, nice) (15%), social programs like universal health care (10%), and economic opportunities (5%). This question was previously asked on an Environics Institute survey in 2016, yielding similar results.<sup>4</sup>

The theme of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion is the most prominent one identified by every identifiable group across the country. It is most widely mentioned by Canadians ages 18 to 29 (57%), those born in another country (55%), racialized Canadians (54%, versus 46% of those who are white), and supporters of the federal NDP (59%) and the Liberal Party (53%). This view is least apt to be shared in among Canadians 60 plus (41%) and supporters of the People's Party of Canada (29%; but still more prominent in this group than such characteristics as the distinctive geography/natural resources/weather (26%) and the country's political system/freedom/democracy (19%)).

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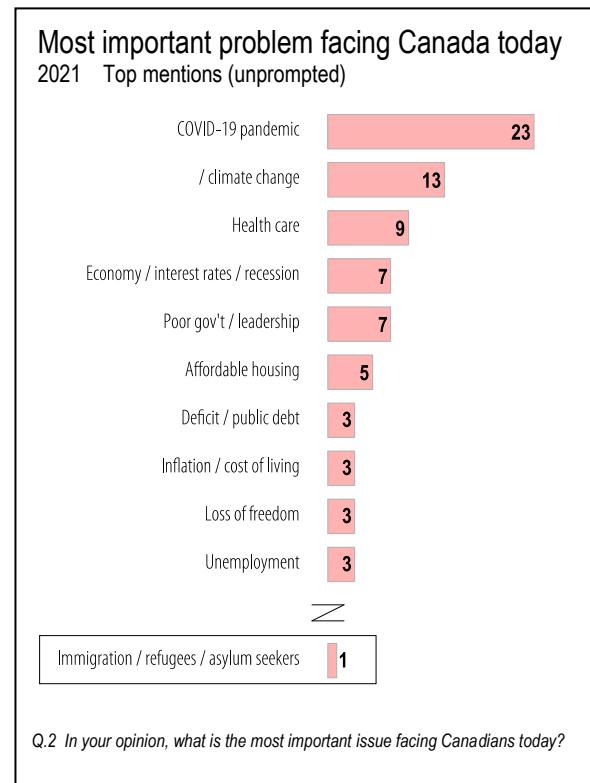
What makes Canada unique? 2021 (unprompted)	
	%
Multiculturalism / identity / inclusive (net)	48
Multiculturalism / diversity	31
Accepts immigrants / refugees	5
Accepts everyone / inclusive	4
Indigenous Peoples / culture	3
Bilingualism / English and French	3
Tolerance	2
Political system (freedom / democracy / safety / peaceful)	25
Land / geography (natural resources / weather / the North)	21
Qualities of the people (friendly, nice)	15
Social programs (health care / public education)	10
Economic opportunity	5
Other attributes	5

Q.5 What do you think makes Canada unique?

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples, 2016, Environics Institute.

**Most important issues facing Canada today.** The other question asked respondents what they consider to be the most important problem facing Canadians today (also asked unprompted; only one response is accepted). Not surprisingly, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (23%) is at the top of the list, followed by the environment and climate change (13%), health care (9%), the economy (7%) and poor government (7%).

Well down the list, only one percent of Canadians identify immigration or refugee-related concerns to be the country's most important issue, consistent with responses to this question on Focus Canada surveys dating back several years. Moreover, this issue is identified by no more than two percent in any identifiable group, including those who support the People's Party of Canada (1%).




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For more information about this research, contact Dr. Keith Neuman at [keith.neuman@environics.ca](mailto:keith.neuman@environics.ca)

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